



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
KILEY GOSSELIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES
FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

H.B. 6659 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Exum, Representative Paris, Senator Berthel, Representative Nuccio, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Kiley Gosselin, and I am the Executive Director at the Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC). PSC leads advocacy, advances original research, and brings together the coalitions needed to drive systemic change towards our shared vision that everyone in Connecticut has a safe, stable home, that is affordable to them, in an equitable community of their choice. PSC serves as the backbone organization supporting the HOMEConnecticut Campaign. The Campaign is led by a broad-based Coordinating Committee to identify and implement data-driven policy solutions and prepare consensus legislative agendas.

We respectfully request that the committee support the following proposals and expansions in addition to the Governor's proposed budget for the Office of Policy and Management (OPM):

The creation of a \$5 million pilot program to support additional housing inspection capacity and enforcement in municipalities with a proactive residential rental licensing or inspection program that require regular inspections without the need for tenants' complaints and ensure landlords' compliance with local health and housing code ordinances.

Much of CT's multifamily housing is old and in disrepair, leaving low-income tenants vulnerable to negative health and safety consequences. These conditions often go unreported and citations go unenforced as the common current practice is that tenants are responsible for submitting complaints regarding unsafe or unhealthy living conditions. When municipalities put the burden of reporting housing code violations on tenants, they put tenants – especially low and moderate income households, in a precarious position. Where Connecticut currently has one of the lowest rental vacancy rates in the country, tenants are unlikely to risk losing their housing as a result of retaliation by landlords – either illegal or through no-cause evictions.

Some cities, however, have enacted proactive residential rental licensing regimes or similar programs which require the city to work with landlords to inspect rental properties on a regular basis for a fee in exchange for documentation that the property is safe to rent. These types of programs take the onus off tenants to monitor the state of our rental housing stock and ensure a fair and equitable approach with landlords to ensuring housing quality and safety. Such regimes have the added benefit of preventing other cost burdens on municipalities including relocation



costs due to emergency evacuations and preventable fires. In short, such regimes can save lives, prevent property loss/damage, and increase housing security.

However, in cities that depend on tenants to complain about their housing conditions, fewer inspectors and less enforcement capacity is needed as tenants chronically underreport violations. For cities that have codified proactive residential rental licensing or inspection regimes, additional inspectors and enforcement capacity may be needed to ensure landlord compliance and follow-through on cited violations. A program of \$2.5 million per year would provide for additional staff and resources to help ensure towns and municipalities with such regimes have the proactive capacity to respond in a timely and on-going manner to resolve housing quality and safety concerns. Such an investment would also serve as an incentive for other municipalities to review their existing housing code compliance practices to determine how they can take the burden off of tenants and better monitor their rental stock for health and safety issues and prevent emergencies and housing insecurity.

More details and information on this proposal can be accessed [here](#).

These investments are necessary for Connecticut to support in the coming years in order to address the rising housing insecurity and inequity that continues to burden residents and families in our state and to support municipalities in maintaining our vital rental housing stock. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding these crucial investments to create safety and stability for CT households.

Sincerely,



Kiley Gosselin
Executive Director, Partnership for Strong Communities